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THE CAPITOLS OF PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania's State Houses
and Capitols

by

HUBERTIS CUMMINGS

Stephen Hills and the Building of
Pennsylvania's First Capitol

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The Vision of William Penn:
Mural Paintings in the Capitol
of Pennsylvania

by

VIOLET OAKLEY

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In the story of Pennsylvania's various state capitals, we see mirrored, as one succeeds another, the territorial expansion and economic development of the Commonwealth.

PENNSYLVANIA'S STATE HOUSES AND CAPITOLS

BY HUBERTIS CUMMINGS

FOR long after the founding of Pennsylvania in 1682 and the Charter of Privileges granted by William Penn to the Province in 1701, colonists took little active thought of where their Assembly should have a fixed place of meeting. Year after year members of that legislative body gathered officially in an inn, a meeting-house, a coffee-house, a market-house, or the commodious residence of some more well-to-do legislator. But, although legislation functioned capably enough with them, despite the lack of a fixed place of assembling, it functioned most regularly within the City of Philadelphia; and Philadelphians grew used to having it there.

It is not surprising, then, that eventually the Assembly had presented to it, on February 20, 1729, a petition praying that that "House would by a law impower" the City and County of Philadelphia to "build a Market and State House in High Street, near the Prison." If this was promptly laid on the table on that day, at the least it served to germinate an idea.

Nine weeks later, on May 1, it emerged in a motion calling for an appropriation of £2,000 which carried unanimously and paved the way for further debate and procedure.

The State House, or "House for the Assembly of this Province to meet in," came slowly. Andrew Hamilton, eminent lawyer and for many years Clerk of Assembly, became chief proponent of a

site and type of structure. Chestnut Street below Sixth replaced High Street as the location. Hamilton had building materials gathered together for it, executed a rough drawing of his concept of how it should be constructed, and pressed preparations. In the summer of 1736 John Penn, "the American," only son of the Founder born in Pennsylvania, made a payment of five pounds to Edmund Woolley for his more expert designs for the new Provincial State House, then in its broader proportions completed. In late September of that same year Mayor William Allen of Philadelphia entertained there at a great banquet of citizens. In October, a few weeks later, the Assembly of Pennsylvania had its first meetings in a building the interior of which would not be fully paneled and wainscoted for five more years, which would not have its great bell installed for summoning members until 1753, and not be pronounced complete with a tower before 1758.

All that was a commonplace and modest evolution for an edifice which in the course of time would become the most famous State House on the American Continent. Even more dull was the fact that the Minutes of Assembly in 1736 made no mention whatever of its gathering there. Government, not place of it, it seemed, was the only important point.

Not until 1775, when the second meeting of Continental Congress occurred in it, or until July 4, 1776, when the Declaration of American Independence was signed in it, was the old Pennsylvania State House to mount into lasting fame. And not until long after that was it to be popularly known as "Independence Hall." Here, however, met the Convention which shaped Pennsylvania's Constitution of 1776; and here in September, 1777, the Assembly of the new State was meeting when Washington's loss of the Battle of the Brandywine threatened Philadelphia with the advance upon it of General Howe's army. Then on the 14th of that month the House ordered its papers and records, under the direction of its Clerk, John Morris, Jr., to be carried up the Delaware River "on board the brig *Sturdy Beggar* to Col. Kirkbride's, and there kept, or carried further." Two days later the House realized that "all active friends of American liberty were obliged to leave" Philadelphia, account having come that "the enemy's army was in full march for this city"; and on the 18th of September it adjourned

as a body, with resolution to meet in the Borough of Lancaster on Thursday, the 25th.

Their records saved by prompt action, Assemblymen got to the inland city as punctually as they severally could; but it was not until the morning of October 6, two days after Washington had retired from the Battle of Germantown, that a quorum of members could be assembled. After that, during the fateful winter when Washington's soldiers suffered with him at Valley Forge, the government of Pennsylvania functioned, somewhat precariously to be sure, at Lancaster; and the Assembly held its meetings in the uncomfortable early brick Court House of that old county seat until May 25, 1778. On that date the body adjourned with plan to gather again, place unnamed, on September 9, only to have the happy experience of being summoned by the Supreme Executive Council of the Commonwealth back to Philadelphia, a month earlier than that, in August. When on the 7th of that month they met again with proper quorum, it was in a State House considerably marred internally by the British occupation but capable of restoration for their use for another twenty-two years.

Indeed, that structure of Andrew Hamilton's and Edmund Wooley's designing, known everywhere as the State House of Pennsylvania, was to remain the physical seat of government for the Commonwealth until 1799. To its early eminence as the site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence it was to add in 1789-1790 the honor of being the place where the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1790 was shaped.

After 1800 strange temporary eclipse was to come upon it.

For on the approach of the nineteenth century, back county influence had become strong in the State. Philadelphia had long ceased having a geographically central position in Pennsylvania. Inland citizens argued there was danger that the local government of that city was likely to become more and more a dominant factor in State affairs. It was convenient to them to add that legislators who went there unhappily exposed themselves to epidemics of yellow fever. The old habit of wanting government nearer their own midst persisted among mid-state folk.

Men proposed for its seat Carlisle, Reading, Wright's Ferry, Harrisburg. Debate in the Assembly returned intermittently after

1795. In April, 1799, Governor Thomas Mifflin approved an Act of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Assembly of Pennsylvania having become bi-cameral under the Constitution of 1790, and by force of it directed the seat of government to be removed to Lancaster in the next November.

Preparations were made more leisurely now than in 1777. The summer beheld frequent spectacles of wagons moving forwards from the city on the Delaware to Lancaster. Accounts for the hauling of desks, books, papers, and records came in great numbers to Commissioners Jacob Strickler, Matthias Barton, and Thomas Boude. On the appointed date, November 1, 1799, Lancaster became the capital of Pennsylvania for a second time; and its new second brick Court House, replica of the earlier one in which the Assembly sat in 1777-1778, became the State House of that Commonwealth to remain such for thirteen years.

But legislators were not yet satisfied that the seat of Pennsylvania's law-making bodies had been made satisfactorily central. In fact, in February, 1810, in the term of office of Governor Simon Snyder, another act was formulated, and, despite the objections of Northumberland County and Philadelphia City and County assemblymen, passed. Harrisburg, on the Susquehanna,



THE OLD STATE HOUSE

Remodeled by Stephen Hills, 1812.

was to be made the seat of government in October, 1812. For a third time, then, the scene of removal of government was re-enacted in the latter year.

This time, however, conditions were different. Two Fire-Proof Buildings, with great stone porticoes on their front elevations, had been built to receive the books and records of officers of state like the Surveyor General, the Auditor, and the Treasurer. The fifteen-year old Dauphin County Court House on Market Street had been renovated by master carpenter Stephen Hills to accommodate the two Houses of the Legislature. The Clerk of the House of Representatives, George Heckert, conducted sale of the furniture which that body had used in its chamber in Lancaster, and helped increase funds for new desks, tables, and record shelves in Harrisburg. Young men of that borough and the neighboring countryside drove covered wagons to Lancaster to load up with libraries, records, legislative records, and executive documents.

For nine years thereafter the second Court House of Dauphin County was known as the State House of Pennsylvania. Newspapers were printed "opposite the State House on Market Street"; boarding house mistresses advertised their locations as "a few doors" from it. But while it served in its proud capacity, the minds of Pennsylvanians and particularly of Harrisburgers were much on another subject. So much, indeed, were they upon it that in March, 1816, the Legislature worked out a scheme for selling the abandoned State House in Philadelphia to the city in which it stood. The State needed funds for the erection of a new Capitol; to procure a substantial amount Independence Hall was offered to the municipal buyer for seventy thousand dollars.

Philadelphia was not long in embracing the proposal of the Commonwealth; and, upon its purchase of the famous old structure, plans were set afoot for the erection of the State's first Capitol at Harrisburg. In 1816-1817 carpenter Stephen Hills, on directions from Commissioners, was busied, as had been Andrew Hamilton almost a century earlier, with the gathering of building tools and supplies. In 1819, in the term of Governor William Findlay, that same competent artisan and architect became the contractor chosen to erect, upon the prize-winning designs he had himself submitted, the much desired edifice. In

December, 1821, at a total cost of \$135,000, Mr. Hills had ready for use the nobly proportioned Capitol which was destined to be the physical seat of government of Pennsylvania from January, 1822, to February, 1897. Its lofty Greek Revival portico and high dome were features of almost pure classic grace. Within its spacious chambers for House and Senate were drawn those laws which created Pennsylvania's most advanced modes of transportation, its canals and its railroads, and which established its proud system of public schools. Within them was drafted section 28 of Article III of the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1874, which makes forever invalid any law which would propose a new location of the State's Capital without previous submission of it to a general referendum of the people.

When fire destroyed this beautiful structure on February 2, 1897, it was as though an era of grandeur had come to an end, although certainly most of us would rather have lost it than Independence Hall.

But old-time Pennsylvanians really needed something like the Commonwealth's magnificent second Capitol, built in 1902-1906, to console them for a loss so incalculable. Italian Renaissance in architectural type, designed by Joseph M. Houston, of Indiana limestone rather than of brick and local sandstone, as was the first Capitol, the present building is incomparably handsome in exterior and interior, exquisite in a thousand of its details. The massive symbolic and meaningful sculptures executed by George Gray Barnard to flank its main entrance; the broad marble steps



WILLIAM FINDLAY

From a lithograph.



THE SQUIRRELS IN THE CAPITOL GROUNDS

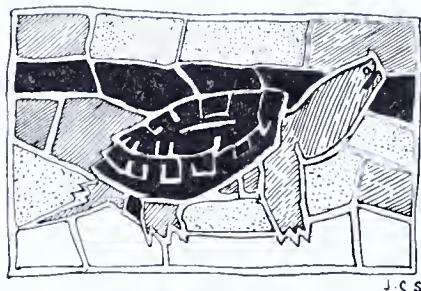
were introduced by Governor Daniel Hartman Hastings (1895-1899), who had a pair brought from the Park of the Virginia Capitol in Richmond. Their descendants at Harrisburg are said to consume annually a short ton of peanuts. The children's costumes shown above belong to Governor Hastings' period.

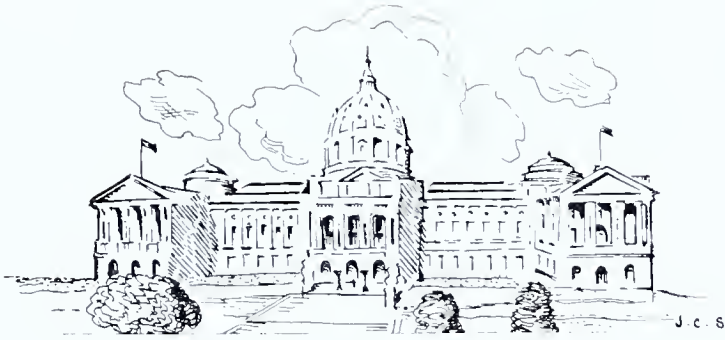
rising between them to the great central bronze door; the colorful figured tiles on the floor of rotunda and corridors within, designed by Henry C. Mercer out of a myriad fancies and aspects of Pennsylvania life in flora and fauna, craftsmanship and pastime, everything, as it were, from oak leaf to button wood, turtle to open-winged bat, coal mine to oil derrick, burdened pack-horse to woman at her spinning wheel, Indian splitting timber with a stone axe to a white man operating a printing press; marble interior stairway and balustrades lifting one's eyes instinctively to the high vaulting of the rotunda and to such noble murals there as Edwin A. Abbey's "Spirit of Light"; the two legislative chambers with their equally graphic murals on eloquent themes out of Pennsylvania history; the moving drama of the life of William Penn and of his meaning to men everywhere today, as it is set forth, in the Governor's Reception Room, in the "Holy Experiment" mural paintings of Pennsylvania's



greatest woman artist, Miss Violet Oakley—all these spell an epic of honor.

It is hardly fifty years old; yet memories of much wise legislation and of Pennsylvania's participation in two great world wars for human liberty cluster about it. It, too, will grow mellow with time. But today it is best for us—as Pennsylvania's four "State Houses" and its other, first Capitol have been best for us—as a visible symbol of the greatness of law, justice, and wisdom in that republican form of government in which men take counsel together for the good of society and a people.



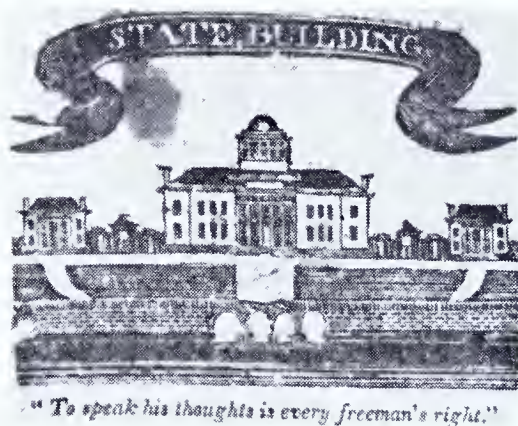


The traditional American state capitol, classic in form and with high symbol in mural and statuary, has something impersonal about it, typifying the enduring majesty of law and government. But, if stones could speak, these imposing edifices would tell a warm and moving story of the individual men whose brain and brawn went into the actual construction. What follows is an intimate narrative, written by a Harrisburg citizen of long standing—author, professor, artist—of the erecting, not of the present Capitol, but of its predecessor, which served Pennsylvania for seventy-five years, from 1822 to 1897.

STEPHEN HILLS AND THE BUILDING OF PENNSYLVANIA'S FIRST CAPITOL

BY HUBERTIS CUMMINGS

THE walls of Pennsylvania's first Capitol rose during the summer and autumn of 1819. Residents of the borough founded on the Susquehanna by the ferryman John Harris, as much as legislators and State officials, beheld the spectacle of building with an ever growing interest. The likelihood of Harrisburg's remaining the Commonwealth's capital city grew more and more into certitude. In December James Peacock was serene enough about the early completion of the structure to prepare—it must have been



by use of one of the architect's draughts of its front elevation—a wood cut of the three "State Buildings." On the last day of the month he inserted it at the head of the editorial page of the *Harrisburg Republican*, and week after week he kept it there.

It pictured the Capitol set in the midst of a trio of edifices, its portico and dome rising lofty. In front an esplanade sloped down to a retaining wall at the foot of a hill, four arches within that apparent barrier of stonework adding a happy touch to the general design. Long walks passing to right and left before the two wing buildings and then down to the fictitious wall brought everything into symmetry. A proud cut, indeed, to shine above the motto of *The Republican*: "To speak his thoughts is every freeman's right." But it anticipated completion of the structure by almost two whole years, and was at the moment confirmatory only of a small-town printer's enthusiasm and a contractor-builder's confidence.

Haste, in fact, had been making slowly ever since the Legislature of Pennsylvania had determined in February, 1810, during the governorship of Simon Snyder, to remove the seat of government of the Commonwealth from Lancaster to Harrisburg in October, 1812. Ready for the offices of the government when it came were two Fire-Proof Buildings built on the hill northeast of the town on directions from the Assembly and under the superintendence of Commissioners John Jacob Bucher, Edward Crouch, and John Dorsey. Formal and proud they had risen; and in commodious rooms to the rear of their high, dignified classical porticoes, shelves and cabinets had since 1812 accommodated the Laws of the Commonwealth, unprinted and printed, the records of the Secretary,

the Treasurer, the Auditor General, and the Surveyor General of the State. But legislation was still constrained to function in the halls of the Dauphin County Court House on Market Street. In cramped quarters, in a structure which had been erected for other purposes in 1792-1799, which in the practice of Harrisburg folk was dubbed the "State-House," and which had been remodeled somewhat for their use in 1812, legislators had perforce to work out their own and the people's will.

Little wonder that they grew restive there, felt the crowding of themselves as they conferred, debated, fought bills through to amendment and final vote and sent them on to the Governor. Little wonder that, as they remembered the fine site but empty space on the hill between the executive offices, they brought to ultimate form on March 11, 1816, an act which promised eventually to provide the Assembly with more adequate legislative halls. Indeed, although it is dumbfounding today, it was hardly surprising to citizens of the time that their Legislature should have determined by that act to sell Independence Hall to "the Mayor, aldermen and citizens of Philadelphia," for \$70,000,¹ a price which, they hoped, would go far towards enabling the Commonwealth to erect a new capitol in the borough of Harrisburg.

The subsequent sale to the city of the old State House which had been built by Edmund Woolley for the Province of Pennsylvania at the behest of the sons of William Penn, and which later had had honor for being the meeting place of Continental Congress and the scene of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, was only a means to a newer and more appropriate governmental end. It was, as it were, as much an act of necessity as it had been necessary for George Heckert, Clerk of the House of Representatives, in the autumn and winter of 1812-1813, to sell the furniture used by the House when its abode was in Lancaster, to help meet the expenses of repairing the Dauphin County Court House for new legislative residence. Mr. Heckert had sold and bought. When he paid, he paid the State's two-thirds of a bill, leaving it to the County of Dauphin to meet the other third of the account.²

It was thus whether he was paying, at the hand of Carpenter

¹ Penna. Laws, 1815-1816, 110-111.

² Removal of Seat of Government Papers, 1812-1813, Public Records Office, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg.

Stephen Hills, sums to this purveyor or that, or settling with Mr. Hills directly for his supply to the State of nails, screws, hinges, sash-weights, locks and escutcheons, rolls of green tape, plated doorknobs, door pulleys, brass nails, 15,000 feet of clear boards, 1,900 feet of yellow pine scantling. All was measured to him in firm, hard detail. All was requited in as hard and unromantic a fashion. For a deft job the House Clerk was used to paying a clean wage—as, in respect of commodities and workmanship, were Pennsylvanians generally four years later.

Such advertisements of proposals for a capitol as had been authorized to Governor Snyder by another act, of March 18, 1816, brought in no results which officialdom could promptly accept as practicable. Eminent William Strickland, architect, himself trained by the yet more famous Benjamin Henry Latrobe, designer of the National Capitol at Washington, forwarded from Philadelphia on October 1 drawings and description for an ambitious edifice. It should be 120 feet front, 135 feet deep, have a semi-circular portico of 60 feet in diameter, with a flight of steps 13 feet high leading up to six Ionic pillars of 4-feet diameter. Interior halls and vestibules, chambers for the two Houses, colonnades right and left connecting with the already built State Offices, statuary in abundance—all were elaborated on to stir excitement in the civic mind. But the cost would be \$300,000, building would require four or five years, and Pennsylvania to date had only \$70,000 towards the project. Strickland's plans were not met with responsiveness. And as little encouraged was the proposal made in December to Governor Snyder by James C. Laveiler, less elaborate in detail but calling for \$330,000.³ Architects' figures were something of a deterrent.

Yet the will to build had been in legislators and citizens. As they saw it, before and immediately after the act of last March 11, what was needed to insure Harrisburg's having an eventual objective and physical seat of government in its midst was a concrete accumulation of workmen's tools and material building supplies. Amass a stock pile near the two Fire-Proof Buildings on the Public Grounds, and some noble and dignified structure was certain some day to rise between them. Gather together the crude products of industry, the implements of labor, and the fundamental skills. Let

³ State Capitol Papers, 1816, Public Records Office.

the work of smith, quarryman, sawyer, brick-maker, ferryman, wagoner, laborer be the prelude to construction. From energy and a store of goods would spring form and beauty, and the master builder would appear in due season. Almost as sentimental as that was the impulse of the year.

For on March 18, 1816, with no architect chosen, the Assembly authorized an appropriation of \$50,000 for the acquisition of construction materials; and by May 2 Stephen Hills was recording his first payment of \$670.44 for white pine boards bought of David Whitaker.⁴ At the touch, as it were, of the master-carpenter who had erected the State's Office Buildings in 1810-1812 and refurbished in 1812-1813 for State purposes the Dauphin County Court House, new activity sprang into being.

For over a decade now leading citizens of Harrisburg and workmen alike had known the big Englishman. Stephen Hills, they said, weighed 250 pounds. Born at Ashford, in Kent, England, in 1771, he had emigrated in the late 1790's to Boston, Massachusetts, then come on to Harrisburg in the early 1800's to build houses. Front Street residents regularly employed him. He was eminently in favor when Messrs. Bucher and Crouch retained him in 1810 as superintending carpenter for the State Buildings. Acceptance of him by those two gentlemen in no way decreased his repute. Legislators had seen him at work on the stairs, the cabinets, the desks at the Court House which he was readying for their use both before and after the beginning of their session of 1812-1813. His competence was familiar to all.

Men intuitively expected expert performance of him, although none knew in 1816 that he would build two state capitols before he died in 1844; that for twenty-eight more years his career would be in the making; that he would be honored in Missouri as the man who in "the golden age" of that State's architecture⁵ built its handsome State House at Jefferson City overlooking a glorious view of the Missouri River; that his name would cling for a hundred years to the ivy-mantled columns of the first University Building at Columbia, Missouri, and remain beloved in the affectionate traditions of a great seat of learning. What men knew

⁴ State Capitol Papers, Hills' voucher list, May, 1816-May, 1817.

⁵ J. S. Ankeny, "A Century of Missouri Art," *Missouri Historical Review*, XVI, 4, p. 482.



27 NORTH FRONT STREET, HARRISBURG

Built by Stephen Hills.

of Stephen Hills in 1816-1817 was that he was busily gathering materials for the construction of a Pennsylvania Capitol.

The stock pile which he ordered and directed grew prosperously until upon it, on May 23, 1817, half of the Legislature's \$50,000 appropriation had been spent.⁶ For, in an era when the "assembly line" was a wholly unknown term, skilled workmen and dealers responded to the man Hills with alacrity. Blacksmith John Geiger forged for him picks, crowbars, wedges, chisels, scrapers, sledges ;

made for him the blades of grubbing hoes, axes, and stone augers; and delivered them to the State's Public Grounds.⁷ James Sweeny, skilled quarryer, gathered together a crew of English-named, Scottish-named, Irish-named workmen with blacksmiths William Nelson and Peter Updegraff to keep the tools of these in repair;⁸ and, from June to November, Sweeny culled sandstone from one quarry or another for the ever increasing stock pile of Stephen Hills. Thomas Osburn, Samuel Lynd, William Forbes, Charles Brady, Patrick Flenigan, Arthur McQuade, and a score of other laborers signed their receipts to Foreman Sweeny for wages paid, and perchance wondered when the fruit of their toil would have visible embodiment in sandstone architecturally placed.

Accounts of other dealers in stone and of their wagoners indicated the scope of Stephen Hills' purchases. From the Susquehanna opposite Harrisburg Adam Orris and his men arduously dragged river stones and hauled 79½ perches of them to the public hill for use in the foundations of the future building. Other hundreds of perches of cellar stone were hauled by Daniel Murphy, George Hoyer, Isaiah Meehaffa, Samuel Garman, Philip Conrad, John Danse, and James White. From York County and lower Cumberland County, to rival the numerous loads of sandstone which had come out of Hummelstown and Derry Township quarries when Messrs. Bucher and Crouch were supervising the construction of the State's two great Office Buildings, there came now to the public hill almost countless wagon loads of similar choice quality. Across the river by Chambers' and Simpson's were ferried the wagons. Dealers and haulers Robert Allison and John Smith paid \$2.00 a wagon to Ferryman Charles Oglesby for getting their burdens over the Susquehanna. Busy men at the ferries were Henry Whitezel and Jacob Gher, and accounts for their services ran upward of \$300.00. Moreover, the indefatigable Irishman Daniel Murphy added to his score of cellar stone not only 668 perches of limestone at \$1.50 a perch but 50 perches of mountain stone at the slightly lower figure of \$1.40.

But the bowels of the earth, valley, river, and mountain, were ransacked not merely for ancient glacial deposits and strata of

⁶ State Capitol Papers, Hills' voucher list, May, 1816-May, 1817.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Hills' accounts, Geiger's bill, 1816.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1816, Sweeny's Time-Roll and Receipts.

usable rock. In architecture roofing is as essential as crypt and foundation. Mr. Hills, mindful of where Messrs. Crouch and Bucher had procured their roofing materials, called upon Jeremiah Brown of Little Britain for slate to be supplied from his Peach Bottom quarries in the southwestern tip of Lancaster County.⁹ In August, 1816, wagoners began transportation of it, and loadings of 1½ to 2 tons each were borne onwards to Harrisburg until November 25 by the good Quaker's men. Samuel Moore and Stephen Bachelor were the first two carriers in 8th month, Moore making his wagon trips again twice in 9th month, once in 10th month, or October, and twice in November. Bachelor was on the roads between Peach Bottom and Harrisburg almost as often. Other carters, John Evans, Frank and Barney Branen, tallied a lower score. For the labor of all his wagoners Jeremiah Brown billed Mr. Hills \$500, and for his 51 ton and 13 hundredweight of slate, at \$38 a ton, \$1,462.70.

The gamble in futurities continued from May, 1816, on into the late spring of 1817. Not until August of the former year did Mr. Hills begin stocking in brick; but Peter Stoll's account of \$559.46 for 66,667 common brick was only an index to other bills which followed in September and October. Load after load came on from other dealers like Cline and Robarts, John Henry, Jacob Shott, George Silzel, Peter Shutt, John Peter Fredericks; wagoners bringing them greatly outnumbered the carters of stone. On hand by the end of November were 1,655,299¹⁰ common and stock brick. Costing 70 cents to one dollar a thousand, these had demanded an expenditure of more than \$7,500;¹¹ and hauling them had seen a multiple activity for men and wagons.

Moreover, as Stephen Hills perforce gambled in supplies from central Pennsylvania brickyards—all of them apparently on the eastern side of the Susquehanna, as no accounts for ferriage were involved—so he gambled in stocks of lumber. Rafting days in the spring brought the products of the forests and the sawmills down the river. The agent of purchase on the public hill began receiving consignments in May, 1816. White pine boards came in abundance. There were bills for over 350,000 feet of them at 75 cents a thou-

⁹ *Ibid.*, account of Brown and voucher of Stephen Hills.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, total computed from accounts of dealers in brick.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, amount computed from Hills' voucher list.

sand in the first month. In June came the more precious yellow pine boards, scantling, and plank at far higher prices, boards at \$12.00, plank at \$20.00, scantling at \$15.00 and \$16.00. After June, consignments ceased for the year. Erasmus Lindy, that good handyman who had worked at one stern task or another while the Fire-Proof Buildings were going up, digging excavations for wells "and necessary houses," hauling stone, brick, and timber, watching stores against prowlers at night,¹² had many a job now cut out for him. There were stone and brick to remove, or to pile; there were shelters to be set up to protect one sort of stock or another. As Hills bought, Lindy labored to keep out weather and wet. The year 1816 passed into 1817, and winter once more into spring. Raftsmen and arkwrights busied themselves on the Susquehanna in the season of "freshets." Down from Owego, New York, by North Branch and River descended the 50,000 feet of "clear white pine boards and plank,"¹³ which Mr. Hills had contracted for in the previous autumn with the lumber merchant Charles Pompilly.¹⁴ Choice stock this which came by long delivery, acquired at a price of \$20.00 a thousand feet and costing in all, as Mr. Hills' voucher list would later indicate, \$1,181.25. Six days after the arrival of the last load of it on May 17, 1817, Lindy submitted a new bill of \$16.90 for piling.

Assembled, in fact, in that month were the crude elements for a more mammoth edifice than ever central Pennsylvania had up till then seen. All that lacked to raise it into shape were a magic wand, the consent in further appropriations of a Legislature, and an architect's plan. None of those needful incentives was now in evidence. As much as Stephen Hills could do was to write Secretary of the Commonwealth Nathaniel B. Boileau and Auditor General George Bryan of how he had carried out duties laid upon him in April, 1816, and collected materials to the cost of \$25,641.41; and of how he deemed it unwise to buy in any further substantial supply on the mere "expectation [he spelled the word *expation*] of the Building being determined on next winter."¹⁵ Well that the

¹² Fire-Proof Buildings Papers, receipts of Lindy.

¹³ Stephen Hills to Nathaniel B. Boileau, December 7, 1816; State Capitol Papers.

¹⁴ Delivery was noted in Hills' voucher as by May 17, 1817; State Capitol Papers.

¹⁵ State Capitol Papers, Stephen Hills to George Bryan and N. B. Boileau, May 26, 1817.

carpenter-architect-buyer had in 1816 completed construction of a fence around the public grounds, and had had his fees for materials and work honored to the amount of \$1,491.93.¹⁶ Like the people of Harrisburg and of the Commonwealth, he could continue waiting for a Capitol.

He had to wait for nearly two more years. Not until January 27, 1819, did the Assembly supplement its acts of March, 1816, for the erection of a State Capitol with an act calling for new proposals. Printer James Peacock of Harrisburg was engaged to put these into the form of circulars. Two months and a half elapsed for the latter to appear in Washington, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Harrisburg newspapers.¹⁷ Then at last, on April 19, the Commissioners to erect a Capitol, Governor William Findlay,¹⁸ Auditor General George Bryan, State Treasurer Richard M. Crain, Associate Justice John Bannister Gibson of the Supreme Court, and Attorney and Book-Seller William Graydon of Harrisburg, met to give final consideration to previously sifted ones of the seventeen proposals submitted. Of the five, Nos. 2, 8, 9, 11, and 17, they made choice of two for awards. To Robert Mills, proponent of No. 17, went the second premium of \$200. To the proponent of No. 8 went the first prize of \$400.¹⁹ Mr. Stephen Hills, the winner of that distinction, had only one day earlier sent in a design for the Capitol of Pennsylvania which as contractor and architect he offered to build "as near as possible to the sum of 120,000,"²⁰ outside sum sanctioned by the Assembly's act of January 27. The man who had directed the assembling and the sheltering of the great stock pile on the hill northeast of Harrisburg had, in fact, been chosen to be the builder.

Today only the letter which accompanied his drawings of the proposed structure and of its position on the public grounds survives. But that letter is so precisely detailed as to remain an almost perfect word-picture of the building which eventually would grace Capitol Hill from 1821 to 1897. In brief, it designated an edifice

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Hills' Account for making the fence.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, receipt of Peacock.

¹⁸ Findlay must have rejoiced to be *ex officio* on this Commission; as early as 1799, when he was a member of the Assembly, he had advocated bringing the seat of government to Harrisburg.

¹⁹ State Capitol Papers, Richard M. Crain to George Bryan, April 19, 1819.

²⁰ Senate Journal, 1819-1820, 43-47.

180 feet front and 80 feet deep, so placed that the two Fire-Proof Office Buildings became wings to it and that a clear range of view was allowed between the column of their porticoes through the six columns of its own high circular portico. Sensitive to mass, proportion, and perspective, Stephen Hills saw all as an harmonious unit externally; and he planned the interior of his Capitol as gracefully, with rotunda tapering upwards to the fluted ceiling of the dome 100 feet above its floor and a double flight of stairs leading to House and to Senate Chamber halls, both of them 21 feet high, accommodated with concentrically placed members' seats, galleries, and speakers' desks. Passages to offices and committee rooms were easily open and free. All parts tended "as rays to the centre";²¹ the spaciousness of design permitted a full dispensing of light—as might be expected of a Capitol whose portico columns were to rise to a height of 36 feet and whose rotunda measured to a diameter of 34 feet and led to a space of 40 feet between the door of the House and that of the Senate.

Indeed nothing seemed wanting to present perfection of structure but the blunt necessity of staying within \$120,000 cost, and planning that the columns of the new portico should be built of brick, not stone, and covered with plaster. So, contract being awarded to him in April, 1819, as well as surety for his performance of it by December, 1821, being furnished by Messrs. Obed Fahnestock, Joseph A. McJimsey, and James S. Espy, of Harrisburg, Stephen Hills set to work with spirit, and did not need to wait long for praise.

On May 7 James Peacock was ready with comment. Not only did that editor of the *Republican* rejoice that Mr. Hills' plan combined "external elegance" with convenient interior arrangement. Not only did he predict that "the execution of the work would in every particular equal the design." Not only did he award encomiums to the Legislature of the late session which set plans in motion for the building, and especially to the members from Dauphin County who had furthered the project. He observed that the cellar was already "partly excavated," and he had discovered that "machinery" was "constructing on an improved plan" for "sawing stone by horse power." Moreover, he could promise his readers a corner-stone laying within a week or two.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

That happy event took place on the last day of May, 1819. At high noon on Monday, the 31st, the Harrisburg Band of Music played, Governor Findlay, and his fellow Commissioners Bryan, Crain, Gibson, and Graydon came officially. A concourse of citizens gathered to look on. The Chief Executive divided the honors of the occasion with stone-cutter William Smith and masons Valentine Kirgan and Samuel White. Everybody present delighted to have the ceremony further bruted by three discharges from public cannon, brought from the nearby State Arsenal. Then a more restricted company of officials, workmen, and burghers partook of a cold collation served to them by public house keeper Melchior Rahm,²² whose own pleasure in the function was by no means reduced by the fact that, as the State Senator from Berks and Dauphin Counties, in 1806-1810,²³ he had worked to have the Seat of Government brought to Harrisburg, and that he had subsequently to that delivered some 50,000 brick from his kilns for erection of the Fire-Proof Buildings.²⁴ The still unbuilt Capitol was a matter of great popular interest. None probably enjoyed the day more than Stephen Hills. It was something for him to see William Findlay and his aides depositing in the corner-stone their great treasure of copies of Pennsylvania State and national documents: from King Charles II's Charter to William Penn to the Declaration of Independence; to the State Constitution of 1776; to the Articles of Confederation of the United States; to the Constitution of the United States; to the 1790 Constitution of Pennsylvania; to all those Acts of Assembly by which the seat of government was removed from Philadelphia to Lancaster, and from Lancaster to Harrisburg, and by which the edifice now building was authorized to be erected. The work of the carpenter, agent of purchases, and architect was under way. He could look north and south and see the graceful porticoes of his earlier achievements in architecture; in his mind's eye he could see the plans which he had set down in his drawings growing into clear shape there on the hill.

In 1820 his Capitol grew into full external shape, and by the close of that year *The Pennsylvania Intelligencer*, founded by

²² *Republican*, June 4, 1819.

²³ State Journal, especially for 1809-1810, where, on p. 189, Rahm's vote for the affirmative is recorded.

²⁴ Fire-Proof Buildings Papers, Receipts of Melchior Rahm and Samuel Comstock.

Charles Mowry, had taken over the enthusiastic Peacock's rights in *The Republican*, including his wood cut, and was ready to go on in the same spirit of pride. On December 5 Mowry published a description of the Capitol, now unfortunately lost; and a week later on December 12 he was pleased to cite a reference to the progress of the building made by Governor Findlay in his message to the newly convening Assembly. By that time, happily, the Chief Executive and the editor were on safe ground. In the preceding March, Findlay had signed an act authorizing the Commissioners to contract with Stephen Hills for constructing the columns and their capitals of hewn stone and for covering the roof of the dome "with some incombustible material."²⁵ Three-and-a-half weeks later that architect, on April 21, had volunteered to build columns and capitals as newly specified²⁶—he needed not to hesitate, for he had already built the porticoes of the Fire-Proof Buildings of cut stone—and to cover with copper the dome and the four square corners of roof from which it rose, these services to be performed for \$15,000 additional²⁷ to the \$120,000 cost of the main construction. On April 22 he had been contracted with to such purposes.²⁸ In the interim between then and December his work had been making considerable advance. Findlay now could expect the Capitol to be ready for the use of the Assembly of 1821-1822, and predict that appropriations would presently have to be made to provide it with furniture.²⁹

Moreover, on the 12th of the month the publisher of the *Intelligencer* could expand editorially on the elegant sample chairs which Mr. Lichtzanthaler was displaying on the floor of the House of Representatives in hope to catch a contract. Mr. Mowry noted that they were durably constructed, comfortable, and elegant—although they differed somewhat from "the three-legged stool on which 'immortal Alfred sat and sway'd the sceptre of his infant realms.'" On January 6, 1821, he could go even further in his delight in the new chief point of attraction in the Capital City of Harrisburg.

On that day, beneath a somewhat truncated and motto-less form

²⁵ *Pamphlet Laws*, 1819-1820, 134.

²⁶ S. J., 1820-1821, 19.

²⁷ P. L., 1819-1820, 134-135.

²⁸ State Capitol Papers, Commissioners' contract with Hills, April 22, 1820.

²⁹ *Penna. Archives*, 4th Series (Governor's Papers), V, 226.

of James Peacock's cut, he printed an ebullient and glowing description of "The Public Buildings"—one that drew into its lines every conceivable mark of dignity to make illustrious a seat of government. The author of this wrote romantically of the eminence on which the new Capitol stood. It was 100 feet higher than the Susquehanna, and overlooked town and country for some distance north and south. But especially was the prospect glorious from "the circular department of the Dome.³⁰ From there "taste was literally cloyed with the beauties of the scenery": of rolling landscape "enlivened by numerous heights and highly cultivated farms"; of glittering reflections of the river, seen for 20 miles of its course; of the borough of Harrisburg, numbering about 1,000 houses, and only 300 paces away; of its "noble bridge, or rather two bridges, each 1,500 feet long, exclusive of an island in the middle of the river, and the causeway which connects them"; of those "more sublime features," the "gap about 7 miles distant where the Susquehanna breaks through that famous range of mountains called the Blue Ridge, which, emblematic of the indissolubility of the Union, runs from Maine to Georgia."

Just who set down all this verbal glow for Charles Mowry is not known today; but, if the writer's comment had small relation to the progress of Stephen Hills' work, it has at least the value of indicating that he had his construction under roof by December, 1820, and the copper-roofed dome of the Capitol in position. For it was from there that the spectator had had his grand view.

Indeed, it would seem safe to believe that the experienced builder Stephen Hills pressed procedure pretty much as do modern contractors. He got the walls of his structure up and its roof on as one main endeavor. He got the interior of his structure and all the intricacies of its details done as a second, and an even more gradual, time-taking task. At any rate the carpenter-architect advanced his work steadily in 1821. His original contract called for completion on or before the first Tuesday of December in that year. He asked for no extension of time when in April, 1820, he contracted to build the columns of the portico in hewn stone rather than brick. On August 17, 1821, Charles Mowry of *The Pennsylvania Intelligencer* hesitated not at all to remark editorially: "there is not much doubt but the Halls will be ready for the reception

³⁰ *Penna. Intelligencer*, Jan. 6, 1821.



THE GAP

Oil Painting by Hubertis Cummings.

of the next Legislature” (which obviously meant to him, Tuesday, December 4, first Tuesday of the month and proper date for reconvening).

In fact by August the plaster work indoors had been completed; the “inclined planes” for members’ desks had begun making, furniture was already arriving. To those signs of advancement in the interior could be added the cheerful news that a street 60 feet wide had been cut through the hill from the corner of Walnut and Third Streets on a range with the front of the three buildings, and that the earth removed by this cut had been deposited in the low ground in front of the Capitol and was now making a hard dry road to the Susquehanna. To cap all those evidences of a proud and succeeding enterprise, Mr. Mowry added the statement that “Mr. Hills, whose indefatigable exertion and care to complete the buildings was entitled to commendation,” had in his employ on the buildings 86 men, besides 24 engaged in the street digging, a total roll of 110.

The year moved on into early November, the restive editor of the *Franklin Gazette* advised his readers that he “understood from Harrisburg that the New Capitol will probably not be prepared for the reception and accommodation of the Legislature at any time during the approaching winter”;³¹ and Charles Mowry was stirred

³¹ *Penna. Intelligencer*, Nov. 9, 1821.

to a rejoinder. Indignantly he responded that the remark came from misinformation. After having read it, he went directly on the subject to Stephen Hills; and that gentleman assured him "that the Capitol will be completed sufficiently for the reception of the Legislature at their first meeting." He would be sorry, however, if they should proceed to occupy it immediately; because of "the greenness of the painting" he wished that the legislators would not think of using it before Christmas.

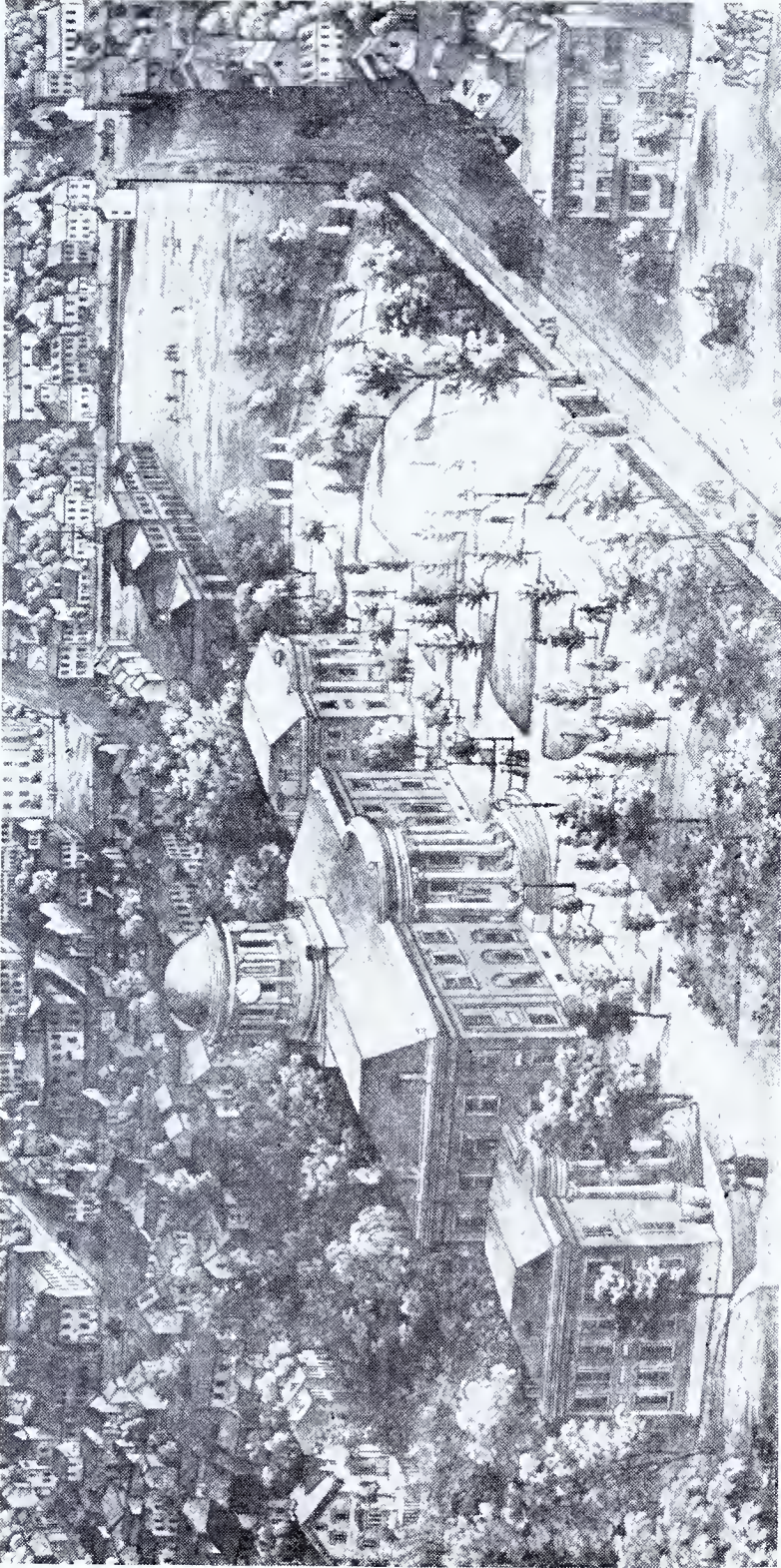
The Legislature went there first on a day of fete on January 2, 1822. Weather conditions were "unusually favorable" for celebration.³² Officialdom, legislative and administrative, with architect, masons, and workmen generally, found it easy to meet and form procession opposite the old "State-House." Ladies of Harrisburg and the adjacent countryside found it just right for taking advantage of the announcement that they would be admitted to the House of Representatives prior to the arrival of the official members, and filled the gallery there before ever the formation of the parade in Market Street at 10 o'clock.

Indifferent to the old Dauphin County Court House, undisturbed by the charred remains of negro John Brown's barber shop, perilously next door to this and burned just three nights before, the men fell into line. Stephen Hills with eighty of his workmen led the way, their group walking two and two. After them came in the march clergymen of the borough headed by President John M. Mason of Dickinson College, Carlisle, and the Rev. Dr. George Lochman of the Lutheran Church, Harrisburg. Then came Governor Hiester and the Heads of his Departments of State followed by the Officers, the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate, and the Officers, the Speaker, and the Members of the House. The Judges succeeded these, and were followed by the Mayor and Council of Harrisburg. Last came citizens.

To Third Street marched all, up Third Street to Walnut Street, into the public grounds at the corner of those two thoroughfares. Past the State Arsenal they came, and past the South Fire-Proof Building. Presently the leaders of the procession were in front of the portico, and Mr. Hills signaled his men to separate into two lines and let the official part of the procession pass between these³³

³² *Ibid.*, Jan. 4, 1822.

³³ *Ibid.*, and *Oracle*, Jan. 5, 1823, and *Chronicle*, Jan. 3, 1822.



PENNSYLVANIA STATE CAPITOL

From J. I. Williams' "View of Harrisburg, 1855."
Courtesy Dauphin Deposit Trust Company

into the Capitol. In orderly form officialdom made its entrance into the great rotunda, with the architect's men prompt to follow. After that there was a rush.

More citizens tried crowding in than could be accommodated; the punctual ladies had already appropriated every possible seat in the House of Representatives which could be seized. In that Hall had to be spoken the prayer and the address of the day to a surging throng of Members, Senators, State Officers, citizens, and pre-empting females. How well the Rev. Messrs. Lochman and Mason were heard, unfortunately, cannot today be declared. But, happily, the complete text of each of the two speakers has been preserved; and in prayer and address can be read much of the spirit of that age when the buyer-carpenter-architect-superintendent Stephen Hills built diligently and without affectation a Capitol for Pennsylvania.

Dr. Lochman was aware of the past of the Commonwealth, of the part which it had played in the struggle for independence, of the prosperity which it enjoyed under its freedom and by the grace of God, of the duties of honor and wisdom incumbent upon it and its Legislature. He was as confident "that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."³⁴ He rejoiced that no lives had been lost in the building of the new Capitol; "no tears of widows or orphans were caused by its erection." God had "preserved and protected its workmen." The good Lutheran prayed that the eyes of the Lord might then "be open into this house night and day" and "watch over it and preserve it from fire and lightning." Emphatically he felt that "except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen wake, but in vain."

The prudent historian may appraise the comments of the clerics Lochman and Mason on January 2, 1822, more as supplication than as prophecy. Rational opinion properly hesitates to declare the exact measure of the fulfillment of any prayer. Wish does not too often constitute future accomplished fact. Admittedly, at the least, the Lord did not always "keep" the Capitol which Stephen Hills built; and the "waking" of the watchmen on February 2, 1897, was certainly considerably "in vain."

On that date the "last edition" of the Harrisburg *Telegraph* headlined the sad news that Pennsylvania's Capitol was in ruins.

³⁴ *Penna. Intelligencer*, Jan. 11, 1822.

It had "Burned to the Ground This Afternoon." Slowly and step by step were recounted the beginning and the progress of the destruction. First discovery of signs of smoke occurred slightly before one o'clock. One hour later the dome collapsed and crashed earthwards. At three o'clock all was a burning heap of debris except the massive two-feet thick walls of the building and the six gaunt stone columns of its great portico.

The *Telegraph* report of the fire offered no encomiums on the vigilance of either executive officers or legislators. It noted that both Houses were in session as the catastrophe struck; it told of the actions of simple men in the sudden moments of stress; it offered brief figures of loss in insurance and monetary terms. It mentioned Governor William Findlay's laying of the corner-stone in May, 1819. It pronounced "valuable documents of the Legislature for years back . . . undoubtedly lost"; and it observed that everything within the old structure, "good and bad, was gone, a sacrifice to the greed of King Fire." It made no reference to the builder; and it reflected no townsman's memory now that the designer and architect of it seventy-five years before had been one Stephen Hills.

Columns of the majestic portico, their white paint scorched and their capitals smoke-stained, stood firm and austere as early dusk fell on Tuesday, February 2, 1897. Their story seemed told. They had reached the end of their cycle. New faces, new times were at hand with the approaching turn of a century. Few men thought now of the scenes which had attended the emergence of the old Capitol.

Particularly none remembered the clink of hammer and chisel as stone cutters on the Public Grounds dressed rude blocks of sandstone into plinth, section of column, section of circular architrave, during the busy months of 1820 in order that Stephen Hills' six-columned portico might presently culminate into splendor. None remembered those later days when tier by tier each column rose into its own noble thirty-six feet of height, while masons Valentine Kirgan and Nicholas Hitzelburger directed the work of their assistants and the architect looked on. There were no steam-powered derricks with wire ropes and block-and-tackle and pulley to aid them. Rather at their advantage were only two boles of trees—they were probably hickories—cut out of Maclay's Woods, crossed near their tops, lashed together into a tall crude 'X,'



THE FIRST CAPITOL

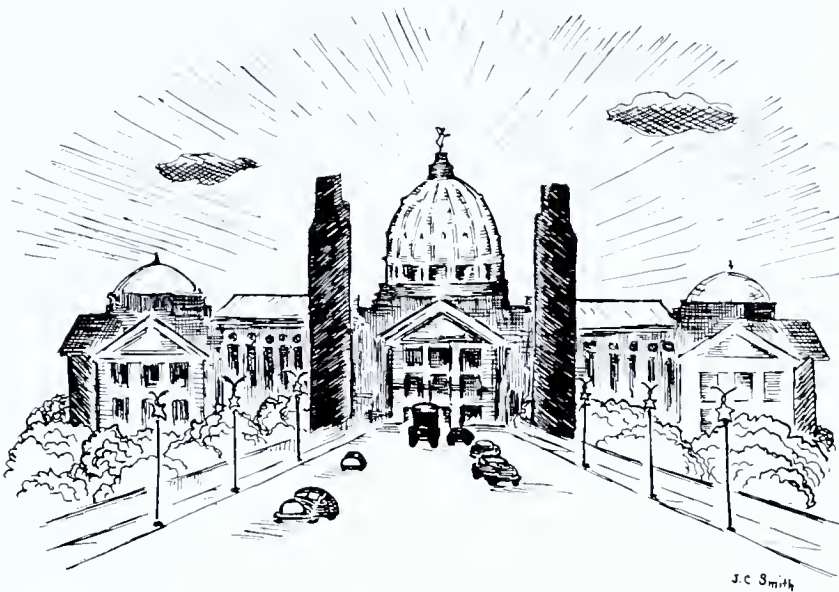
As originally built by Stephen Hills, prior to alterations. Photographed by
George W. Keene, c. 1870.
From negative in the State Museum.



AFTER THE FIRE

Courtesy the Historical Society of Dauphin County

which men of the time called shears, their sloping power to lift and to lower regulated by winch and ropes, the point of crossing and winding or unwinding at the will of man-manipulated handle and ratchet. By such a pioneer contrivance, and by the rope and tongs suspended from the point of crossing, each cylinder of sandstone was raised from the position on the ground nearby to which wooden rollers and crowbars had brought it, then steadily guided into exact place above the plinth or the cylinder beneath it by the strong, deft hands of workmen poised on a scaffold encircling each column and rising from day to day with it as it climaxed to full altitude. All the strain, the skill, the wonder of the task had been forgotten, although the very ruin of the work in February, 1897, was even then a stark testimony of its greatness as an achievement rendered, under the authority of a Governor and a Commission, with the enthusiasm of Pennsylvania workingmen and small-town merchants in 1819-1821, and the capable surveillance of a master-carpenter who had grown into the brilliant, however modest, architect Stephen Hills.





VIOLET OAKLEY
Photo by Florence Maynard

Foremost among the treasures in the Capitol at Harrisburg are the mural paintings by Violet Oakley, depicting William Penn's vision and its fulfillment. Miss Oakley, whose unique position in American art is so well known as to place her beyond the need of introduction, here tells how she came to paint them and what they mean to her. The illustrations are her own reproductions in black and white of paintings in the Governor's Reception Room, the Senate Chamber, and the Supreme Court Room.

The Vision of William Penn*

*Mural Paintings in the
Capitol of Pennsylvania*

BY VIOLET OAKLEY

Prologue

MY OWN FAITH IN AN ORGANIZED WORLD GOVERNED BY INTERNATIONAL LAW dates from my first study of the life of William Penn and his "Holy Experiment," as he called the unfortified Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in 1682.

The study was begun when I was asked to design and execute the series of mural paintings in the Governor's

*Copyright, 1953, by Violet Oakley.

Reception Room in the (then) new State Capitol of Pennsylvania. I named this series

THE FOUNDING OF THE STATE OF LIBERTY SPIRITUAL.

Some years later the study was continued when I was commissioned to decorate also the Senate Chamber and the Supreme Court Room in the same building. The themes, as they developed, became respectively

THE CREATION AND PRESERVATION OF THE UNION and THE OPENING OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW. .

Deeply was I impressed when I found that not only had Penn established his Colony successfully in the Wilderness, in the midst of alien Tribes, with no military power whatever, but with his far-seeing vision—so illuminated by the “Inner Light”—he wrote and published, in 1693, a detailed plan for a

PARLIAMENT OF NATIONS and AN INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

Viewed in the light of the Ideological struggle in the world today, and the enforced development of international cooperation, the pages of the Notes in the original Portfolios of “The Holy Experiment” and “Law Triumphant” take on a new significance: the outcome so urgent upon us now—foreshadowed in the Pennsylvania Paintings—being but a fulfillment of the Vision and the Prophecy of the Founder of our Commonwealth.

For William Penn and those early invulnerable, incorruptible Quakers of the Seventeenth Century made a complete demonstration of *Security* based upon absolute *Justice*. But, as a scientific laboratory test, Penn’s Holy

Experiment has not been sufficiently understood or studied.

When the book with pen and ink drawings of all my paintings in the Pennsylvania Capitol was finally brought out, in October, 1950, in presenting it to the subscribers I said:

“I present to you a Book on The LAW, the Law of LOVE and WISDOM, as exemplified in the Life of a man, our William Penn, and its effect upon our subsequent history and institutions.

“This Law, when lived, renders War unnecessary—as unnecessary as it is undesirable. ‘And the Desire of All Nations shall come.’ The outmoded, clumsy carnal weapons are laid aside for the more powerful mental, and spiritual, and ideological weapons demanded by the progress of today.”

The Founding of the State of Liberty Spiritual

The Frieze in the Governor's Reception Room

THE FOUNDATION OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA was laid deep in the hearts and characters of the men and women who founded it, and in the condition of thought of the times in which they lived, suffered, endured—and finally triumphed.

To understand what these influences were, it is necessary to approach the subject of the great religious upheaval during the period of William Penn and the early Quakers. Penn himself, before joining the Quakers, had been what was then called a “Seeker.”



Panel 6, west wall

*Original painting 6 ft. by 6 ft. 6 in.
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.*

WILLIAM PENN, STUDENT AT CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD, 1660, stirred by his own Vision of Light and consecrated to God's service. He believed that the seal of Divinity had been put upon him. In the center of the light are the words, "He shall build My City and he shall let go My Captives."

Later in life, when writing of Pennsylvania, he said: "I had an Opening of Joy as to these parts when a Lad at Oxford."

From time to time, from the days of his early childhood, he had had these experiences, when alone in his room in deep meditation, of a sense of Inner Comfort and Light, and at the same time an Outer Light filled the room. He was distinctly conscious of the Being of God and that the soul of man could hold communion with Him.

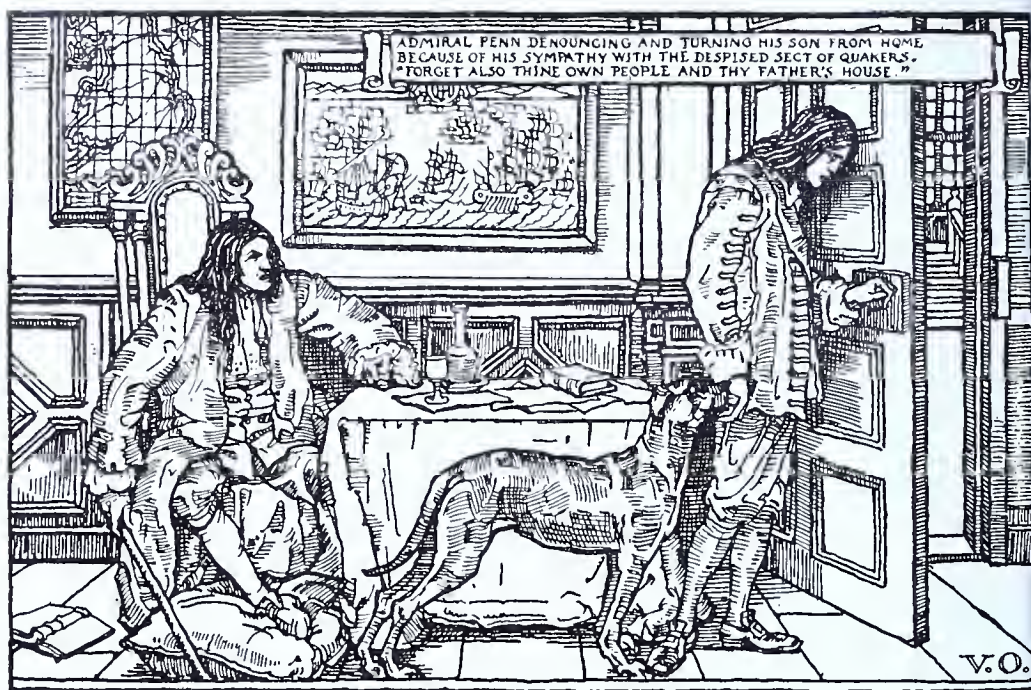


Panel 7, north wall

Original painting 6 ft. by 13 ft.
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.

PENN MEETS THE QUAKER-THOUGHT IN THE FIELD-PREACHING at Oxford.
He turns from the world to listen to its Message.

Penn was entered at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1660—the year of the Restoration—at the age of sixteen. In 1662 he was expelled from College for attending the Quaker Meetings and neglecting Chapel Services.



Panel 8, north wall.

Original painting 6 ft. by 9 ft. 6 in.
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.

ADMIRAL SIR WILLIAM PENN DENOUNCES AND TURNS HIS SON FROM HOME because of his sympathy with the despised sect of Quakers.

The Admiral had been most ambitious for his son, desiring that he should become a great courtier and statesman and hold some important position under the Crown. He was infuriated and humiliated by William's expulsion from Oxford.

Through the intercession of his Mother, his Father was afterwards reconciled to him.



Panel 9-A, north wall
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.



Panel 9-C, north wall
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.

Panel 9-A: PENN'S ARREST WHILE PREACHING AT MEETING—under the Conventicle Acts, which made unlawful any service except that of the Church of England.

Panel 9-C: WRITING IN PRISON: "THE GREAT CASE OF LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE once more briefly debated and defended, by the authority of Reason, Scripture, and Antiquity."

In this most scholarly treatise, which won him his liberation, he quotes from innumerable authors of ancient and more modern times to prove that the Divine Principle of Toleration has always been consonant with the wisest idea of government. Throughout the darkest times of persecution the voice of the truly great has always declared it.



Panel 10, north wall

Original painting 6 ft. by 9 ft. 6 in.
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.

Having been liberated through the force of his own writings, PENN SEEKS TO FREE OTHER FRIENDS IMPRISONED, and makes use of the powerful influence with the crown, inherited from his Father, to secure their liberation. Much of his fortune was spent in this work.

“By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many . . . therefore will I divide him a portion with the Great.”

The desire of his life was to bring out of Captivity all those who were oppressed for conscience' sake, whatever their creed or belief. He saw himself as leading the multitudes from prison—to take them to a Land of perfect Freedom.



Panel II, north wall

*Original painting 6 ft. by 13 ft.
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.*

PENN'S VISION: "BEHOLD MY SERVANT WHOM I UPHOLD HE SHALL NOT fail nor be discouraged till He have set JUDGMENT in the earth . . . to open the Blind Eyes, to bring out the Prisoners from the Prison, and Them that sit in Darkness out of the Prison-House. Sing unto the LORD a New Song, Ye that go down to the SEA."

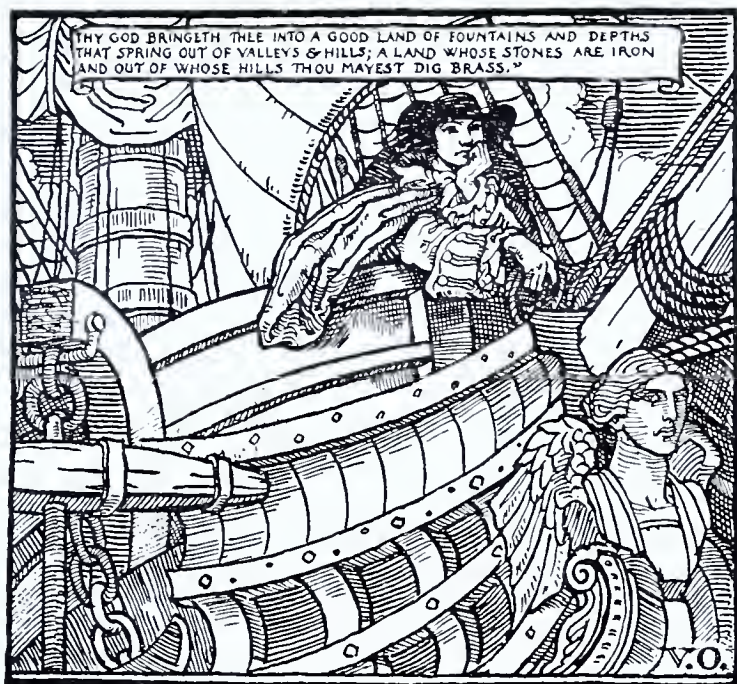


Panel 12, cast wall

*Original painting 6 ft. by 6 ft. 6 in.
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.*

ACHIEVEMENT OF HIS PURPOSE: THE CHARTER OF PENNSYLVANIA receives the King's signature, March 4, 1681, granting to William Penn this great tract of land almost as large as England itself, in payment of a debt of £16,000 which the Crown owed to his Father's estates for assistance rendered by the Admiral in the Restoration of Charles II to the Throne.

"By the greatness of Thine Arm they shall be as still as a stone, till Thy People pass over, O Lord, which Thou hast purchased."



Panel 13, east wall

*Original painting 6 ft. by 6 ft. 6 in.
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.*

PENN'S FIRST SIGHT OF THE SHORES OF PENNSYLVANIA, as he ascends the River—"from whence the air smelt as sweet as a new-blown Garden."

"Thy God bringeth thee into a good land—of brooks of water—of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills—a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."

THUS THE PAINTINGS IN THE GOVERNOR'S Room were so planned as to deal exclusively with the Foundation of the State and stopped just short of recording any event within the life of the State itself—bringing William Penn, in the prow of the ship *Welcome*, only within sight of his Promised Land.

These paintings, which I had begun in 1902, were completed just before the new Capitol building was finished and dedicated, and they were set in place the following month, at Thanksgiving Time, 1906.

The Creation and Preservation of the Union

FIVE YEARS AFTER THE PAINTINGS IN THE Governor's Reception Room were set in place, and soon after the death of that great American painter, Edwin Austin Abbey, I was asked by the Board of Commissioners to undertake that part of his contract with the State which at the time of his death he had not even begun. I was not asked, as has been mistakenly reported, to finish any of the Paintings which he had begun or planned. That was done by his own Assistant in his Studio in England.

The work which thus fell to me consisted of the Mural Paintings in the Senate Chamber and the Supreme Court Room.

Thus it happened—after these five years—that I had to take up again the threads and weave on the tapestry the History of a State, symbolizing now the great Structure whose deep Foundations I had before seen in the laying. What might not be the Destiny of this State builded upon such Foundations of pure and complete

Spiritual Liberty? I saw the building of it rise—in strength and piercing beauty—to the Stars, up and up to the very CITY of GOD.

“It was only a ‘holy experiment,’ ” wrote Isaac Sharpless, “but it is one of the exalted scenes of History. Here in Pennsylvania was the chance to make the Divine LAW and the Human ONE.”

I burned to build a great Monument, not only as its Memorial, but that it might *live again*—“For there is hope of a Tree—if it be cut down—that it will sprout again and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.”

In the Foundation Stones of PENNSYLVANIA were laid these Sapphires:—

The Testimony of the Friends against carnal warfare;
The Testimony of the Friends against human slavery;
The Doctrine of universal “Inner Light”;
Civil and Religious Liberty; and
The Spiritual Equality of Man and Woman.

The same fearless, trumpet-speaking voice of the Founder foretold, also, what should be builded thereon: “That it may be the Seed of a NATION, for THE NATIONS need a PRECEDENT.”

TWO GREAT EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF Pennsylvania are noted in these paintings in the Senate Chamber: The CREATION and the PRESERVATION of the UNION—“The Constitutional Convention, 1787,” and “The Dedication at Gettysburg, 1863.”

The inscription on the first is from the words of Washington: “Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair—the event is in the hand of God.”

Over the second are the words from Lincoln: “It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work.”



Panel 4

Original painting 16 ft. 4 in. by 10 ft.
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.



Panel 6

Original painting 16 ft. 4 in. by 10 ft.
Copyright, 1950, by Violet Oakley.

Of our Constitution Gladstone has written: "The American Constitution is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of Man." John Fiske has said: "The great puzzle of civilization—how to secure permanent concert of action without sacrificing independence of action. Thus we have seen the real purpose of American Federalism. . . . To have established such a system over one Great Continent is to have made a very good beginning towards establishing it over all the WORLD."

IS NOT THE TIME ALMOST RIPE, THE BLEEDING WORLD ALMOST ready, for another "HOLY EXPERIMENT," a trial of UNITY? I invoke the spirit

of PENN
of WASHINGTON
of FRANKLIN
of HAMILTON
and
of our FATHER ABRAHAM!

Of Alexander Hamilton it has been written: "He prevailed upon his countrymen to make a trial of UNION, and by the audacity of his procedure he filled a written Charter with the Spirit of Life."

—*F. S. Oliver*

In 1912, two years before the outbreak of the Great War, this theme for the Senate Chamber was planned. That it had reached this point of development at the moment when the great Conference of Peace was holding its sessions in the city of Paris—where a practicable plan for a League of Nations was known to be the only "just and sane" guarantee of the peace of the world—was corroboration and justification enough, my sufficient reward



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for daring to paint the great panel overhead, “International Understanding and Unity” at a time when the idea of the Federation of the World was considered by the vast majority of mankind a most wild and forlorn Dream of Visionaries.

The Opening of the Book of the Law

A UNITY OF IMPRESSION, IN THIS SERIES of paintings in the Supreme Court Room, is gained by an arbitrary unity and simplicity of style adapted from the illuminations of ancient manuscripts. IT IS THE OPEN BOOK OF THE LAW, UNSEALED—as a scroll unrolled—upon the wall—to be read by all.

As Tyndale said that he would make of the Bible a Book “to be easily understood of the people,” so we would make of the hosts of LAW a Code, to be seen and comprehended of all.

The first paintings in the Senate Chamber were unveiled on Lincoln’s Birthday, 1917, and dedicated to the Cause of Peace—a few weeks only before the country entered the World War. Ten years passed. On the 23rd



of May, 1927, the paintings in the Supreme Court Room were also dedicated "To the Cause of Peace." For it is to The Law we look, to Law that the whole world looks for the permanent establishment of Peace, and the dis-establishment of the now lawless method of settling the puzzling disputes which still arise between Nations.

DIVINE LAW is both the first and the last panel in the series, the "Alpha and Omega" of the law. The great divisions of the law are symbolized as notes in a musical scale, an octave, the keynote of which is Divine Law.

A great monogram fills the panel, made up of the illuminated letters L A W. Subsidiary letters forming the words Love and Wisdom are put in place by the winged figures of the Seraphim and Cherubim, symbolically garbed in red and blue.

The other notes in the musical scale are :

2. Law of Nature ;
3. Revealed Law ;
4. Law of Reason ;
5. Common Law ;
6. Law of Nations ;
7. International Law.

In the last note we return to the keynote :

8. Divine Law.

Conclusion

IN THE SPRING OF 1927, THE PAINTINGS IN the Supreme Court Room were completed; the following month of June I sailed for Europe on my determined way to the City of Geneva, where I wished to observe the development of International Law—the seventh note in my Musical Scale of the Law. I finally arrived in September, in time for the opening of the Eighth Annual Assembly of the League of Nations.

William Penn seemed to have gone in advance and prepared the way for the study of the people now carrying on his own far distant vision of a Parliament of Nations, the study I was to make during the months of September and October in 1927, '28, and '29.

In 1929, at the end of my stay in Geneva, where I had prepared my portfolio of the Men of Geneva, I wrote

in my Journal: "My thought retraces the steps of the progressive development of the Pennsylvania Paintings . . . to its first theme, 'The Founding of the State of Liberty Spiritual'; then the second (in the Senate Chamber), 'The Creation and Preservation of the Union,' by which I never meant anything less than the Union of the whole world; and then—"The Opening of the Book of the Law' (in the Supreme Court Room). Already the title of the group of Geneva Drawings is decided upon and is to be called 'The Miracle of Geneva.' Perhaps the future work may be revealed as still further pertaining to

THE BUILDING OF THE CITY OF GOD,
DE CIVITATE DEI."

When composing the Foreword to the Book of "The Holy Experiment: Our Heritage from William Penn," in the summer of 1949—*vingt ans après*—at Caux, Switzerland, I wrote this Note:

"A companion Volume to this Book is now in contemplation, to include a selection of The Geneva Drawings, together with some of the late Drawings of Delegates to the United Nations, in New York, 1946. To these will be added a group of the studies of Delegates to the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament at Caux—in 1949. The title of this second volume will be

THE COMING OF THE CITY OF GOD."

Epilogue

1953

The experience in Korea may seem to illustrate the far greater force of intelligent Ideas in settling disputes, and their superiority over military armaments of destruction.

When the American General, Mark W. Clark, in command of the United Nations armies in Korea, signed the Armistice, he said: "I cannot find it in my heart to exult in this hour. It is rather A TIME FOR PRAYER."

Let us fervently hope that we are all accepting this challenge—and taking full advantage of this time for deep meditation and the realization of the Power of Prayer to remove mountains of disagreement between the differing Peoples of the Earth: to give strength to the Mental and Spiritual Arms of the United Nations, and to bring all the Nations of the World into one great Family of Nations.

Soon after it had been proposed that the Truce negotiations should be resumed in Korea, President Eisenhower's wonderful speech, on April 16, 1953, was broadcast to the world and published in the newspapers. It was a call to all Nations to "join in devoting a substantial percentage of the savings achieved by Disarmament to a Fund for

WORLD RECONSTRUCTION."

He outlined the monumental benefits that would flow from an ERA OF PEACE and Dedication of the World's Energies to wiping out Poverty and Need.

"This would be a new kind of Warfare," he asserted.

The monuments of this new kind of Warfare he described as Roads, Schools, Hospitals, Homes, Food, and Health—comparing them with the cost of Armaments.

“LET US THEN TRY WHAT LOVE WILL
DO:
FOR IF MEN DID ONCE SEE WE LOVE
THEM,
WE SHOULD SOON FIND THEY WOULD
NOT HARM US.”

—*William Penn*



